REMARKS

In the above-referenced office action, the examiner indicated that Claims 21, 22, 43 and 44 would be allowable if written in independent form including all of the elements of the base claim and any intervening claims. The substance of various of these claims have been incorporated into new Claims 86-88, which should thus be allowed.

In the referenced office action, the examiner rejected Claims 1-20 and 23-42 as being unpatentable under 35 USC § 103 (a) over U.S. Design Pat. No. 296,658 to Mead in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,704,967 to Gianelli. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The enclosed set of claims includes features of Applicant's invention that are not taught or suggested in the Mead or Gianelli references taken alone or in combination. Illustrative Claims 45, 46, 65, 66 are 67 are now discussed.

With reference to Fig. 3 and the specification, independent Claim 45 recites a vertically inclined door (20), a door latch (25) mounted in the door (Spec. at 4, Lines 16-20), a shaft (22) for controlling the door latch (Spec. at 4, Lines 19-20), a door knob ("mounting section 14") held to the shaft (Spec. at 4, Lines 18-19). The foregoing structure may be embodied as a conventional door latch arrangement in a door that opens to allow humans to walk though a doorway, for instance. On the other hand, the Mead reference fails to teach or suggest the foregoing elements, teaching instead a flat handle that is affixed to a toilet seat for lifting a toilet seat. Gianelli fails to remedy the deficiencies of Mead, whereby independent Claim 45 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

With reference to Figs. 3 and 4, independent Claim 65 recites a door knob (10) having a main axis orthogonal to a main surface of the door. The door knob is mounted directly (Fig. 4) or indirectly (Fig. 3) to the door. The indirect mounting of Fig. 3 includes mounting the knob to the shaft (22), which in turn is mounted to the latch (25), etc. The door knob comprises protective translucent material (12) having a maximum cross-sectional area taken along the main axis. The door knob (10) further comprises a portion adjacent the door and having a surface that has a cross-sectional area taken along the main axis that is less than the first-mentioned maximum cross-sectional area. Mead does not teach or suggest any differences in cross-sectional areas of her handle taken along a main axis orthogonal to a main surface of a "door." Gianelli fails to remedy this deficiency of Mead, whereby Claim 65 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

As read on Figs. 3 and 4, dependent Claim 66 recites that the knob is mounted to the

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door directly (Fig. 4, via shaft of screw 28) or indirectly (Fig. 3, via shaft 22) by a shaft having a portion extending into the knob. The portion extending into the knob is situated along the main axis of the knob between the door (20, Fig. 3 or 26, Fig. 4) and the at least one object (e.g., 16, Figs. 1 and 2). As recited in base Claim 66, the main axis is orthogonal to a main surface of the door. Mead fails to teach or suggest the foregoing structural elements of Claim 66. Gianelli fails to remedy the deficiency of Mead in this regard. Therefore, Claim 66 emphatically distinguishes over the prior art on its own merits.

Dependent Claims 46 and 67 specify that the door is large enough to allow humans to walk through a doorway that is selectively closed by the door. Spec. at 2, Lines 8-9. Assuming merely for sake of argument that the toilet seat of Mead or Gianelli is a "door," such a "door" is neither large enough for humans to walk through a doorway that is selectively closed by the door, nor is it vertically inclined. Dependent Claims 46 and 67 thereby emphatically distinguish over the prior art on their own merits.

Dependent Claims 54 and 75 each recite "at least two objects spatially separated from each other along said [rotational or main] axis." Mead fails to show "at least two objects spatially separated from each other along a [rotational or main] axis." Gianelli fails to remedy Mead in this regard, whereby these claims emphatically distinguish over the prior art on their own merits.

Dependent Claims 64 and 85 further recite that the knob includes a locking mechanism with a keyhole in the vicinity of the at least one object. This feature is nowhere taught or suggested by Mead or Gianelli taken alone or in combination, or by the other art of record. So, Claims 64 and 85 emphatically distinguish over the prior art on their own merits.

The other claims depending from independent Claims 45 and 65 define further aspects of Applicant's invention so as to more forcefully distinguish over the prior art than their base claims.

The pending claims should be allowed.

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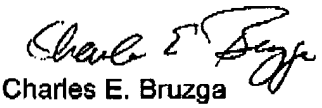
Application No. 10/677,053
Date: March 29, 2006

I certify that the foregoing document and any document(s) referenced below are being faxed to the above-mentioned recipient at the above-mentioned fax number on the date stated below.

Dated: March 29, 2006

Respectfully submitted,



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